

Women, Peace and Security

September 2024

Afghanistan

For September, in which Slovenia has the presidency of the UN Security Council, the MAP provides recommendations on the situations in **Afghanistan, Israel/Palestine, and Yemen.**

Afghanistan remains the most serious women's rights crisis in the world, as the Taliban impose [escalating](#) policies of gender-based discrimination affecting [nearly every aspect](#) of [public and private life](#) for women and girls. [Experts](#) warn that these ongoing escalating, systematic, and grave violations of the rights of women, girls, and [LGBTIQ and gender-diverse](#) people may amount to [gender persecution](#) — a crime against humanity. Both [Afghan women](#) and [international experts](#) describe the situation as [gender apartheid](#), and have [called](#) for its [codification](#) as a crime against humanity. Women and girls from minority ethnic and religious groups, including the [Hazara](#), face additional violence and discrimination. The Taliban continue to target [activists, journalists, human rights defenders](#) (HRDs), [women protestors](#), and women and girls who have [allegedly violated](#) the Taliban's [dress code](#), [arbitrarily detaining](#) them without charge or access to legal representation. Women and girls face serious [abuses in custody](#), including [torture](#) and [rape](#).

[23.7 million people](#), almost 80% of whom are women and children, require humanitarian aid; [13.3 million](#) people need services for gender-based violence (GBV); and [one-third](#) of Afghans currently face acute food insecurity. To date, the 2024 Humanitarian Response [Plan](#) request is only [25.1%](#) funded, and Taliban restrictions hinder the work of women-led organizations and women working in the aid sector, further reducing access to assistance for women, girls, and women-headed households.

During forthcoming meetings, Council members should:

- Demand that the Taliban immediately reverse all policies and practices that prevent the full enjoyment of all women's human rights, in accordance with Afghanistan's international obligations, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and [relevant Security Council resolutions](#).
- Ensure a strong focus on women's rights and the full, equal, meaningful, and safe participation of diverse Afghan women and LGBTIQ people, especially women human rights defenders (WHRDs) and peacebuilders, in all international discussions and outcomes about Afghanistan's future, including any future mechanisms for international engagement on Afghanistan and the work of a UN Special Envoy on Afghanistan.
- [Ensure](#) that the Special Envoy on Afghanistan, due to be appointed, and their team have deep expertise on human rights and women's rights, and that they regularly and meaningfully engage with diverse Afghan women and LGBTIQ civil society, including WHRDs, to ensure that their views inform all aspects of the Envoy's work.
- Call for [immediate reversal](#) of the [ban](#) on Afghan women [working](#) for the UN and NGOs, which violates both the UN Charter and CEDAW, and urge all humanitarian actors and their donors to ensure safe, gender-responsive, and non-discriminatory humanitarian delivery to all Afghans in need. Support women's participation and leadership in humanitarian action and decision-making, including by ensuring that women aid workers are not replaced by men, and covering costs or taking any additional measures to ensure their full and equal participation. Allocate increased flexible and direct funding to local and national civil society and humanitarian organizations, especially women-led organizations; ensure intersectional gender analysis grounded in meaningful consultation with women and girls informs the crisis response, and adequately fund protection and GBV response.
- Call for all parties, including the Taliban and other armed groups, to respect international human rights and humanitarian law; immediately stop targeting HRDs, peacebuilders, and [journalists](#); and release all who have been arbitrarily arrested and detained.
- Call for [accountability](#) for all violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, including gender-based crimes, and support measures to [investigate](#) and prosecute those responsible for such violations, including through the [International Criminal Court investigation](#), a [potential case under CEDAW](#) at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), or the creation of a UN mechanism to [document and preserve evidence](#).

Israel-Palestine

Continuing widespread violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory must be understood in the context of Israel's [unlawful occupation](#) of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, which impacts Palestinian women and girls [based on the intersection of their gender and racial identities](#).

Hostilities in Gaza since October 2023 have now killed over [40,000](#) Palestinians, and displaced nearly [1 million](#) women. [Shelters, including school buildings](#), are increasingly the targets of Israeli airstrikes, with [at least 21 documented](#) between 4 July and 10 August alone. The constant [bombardment](#) of hospitals, combined with the Israeli government's restrictions on fuel, water, and aid, has decimated the healthcare system, putting [mothers and their newborns](#) at risk of significant [physical](#) and [mental](#) harm and violating women's [sexual and reproductive health and rights](#). It also risks outbreaks of infectious diseases including [polio](#) and [hepatitis A](#). More than [160,000](#) pregnant and lactating women are unable to access essential

services. About [96%](#) of the population, including at least [557,000](#) women, face acute food insecurity, with [famine](#) an [imminent concern](#), [exposing](#) women and marginalized groups to additional health consequences and protection risks as a result. Violence has also escalated since 7 October in the West Bank. [587](#) Palestinians have been killed, and [over 3,200](#) displaced by Israeli forces' demolition or confiscation of their homes. Arrests of Palestinians have also [surged](#), and Palestinian detainees, including women and girls, [reportedly](#) face [torture, including sexual violence](#), in detention.

The Security Council must:

- Demand an immediate, full, and complete ceasefire in accordance with Resolution [2735](#) (2024).
- Demand all parties [comply with their obligations](#) under international law, including stopping all attacks on civilians, civilian infrastructure, and humanitarian actors.
- Ensure full, immediate, safe, and [unhindered](#) humanitarian [access](#) for the provision of basic services and life-saving relief assistance, including [food](#), water, fuel, medical supplies and care, electricity, and internet access, and [safe access of humanitarian and medical personnel](#) into Gaza, as required by Resolutions [2728](#) and [2720](#) (2023).
- Demand an [immediate halt](#) to the transfer of weapons, parts, and ammunition to Israel and to Palestinian armed groups [while there is risk](#) that they are used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international law.
- [Demand](#) the humane treatment, and immediate and unconditional [release](#), of all hostages and all forcibly detained and imprisoned without charge, in accordance with international humanitarian law.
- Call on the Government of Israel to immediately and fully comply with all [provisional measures](#) ordered by the ICJ to protect Palestinians in Gaza from acts of genocide, including lifting the blockade of Gaza. All Member States must uphold their obligation to prevent genocide.
- Demand an immediate end to the forcible transfer of civilians in violation of international humanitarian law and an immediate [end to all measures](#) aimed at altering the demographic composition, character, and status of Palestinian territory.
- Call on donors to increase sustainable, direct, and flexible funding for national NGOs, particularly local women-led civil society organizations, while also pledging [support](#) for the continued vital operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).
- Urge all parties to cooperate with independent, impartial, investigative mechanisms, including the [Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and Israel](#), to monitor, collect, and verify evidence, and report on human rights violations and abuses, including all forms of GBV, committed by all parties on and since 7 October; further, ensure that all justice and accountability efforts are human rights-based, survivor-centered, and non-discriminatory, and designed and implemented in partnership with survivors.
- Demand respect for the rights of diverse Palestinian women, including WHRDs, peace activists, and journalists, in line with international law, and demand their full, equal, meaningful, and safe participation in any and all efforts to build peace.

Yemen

10 years into the conflict, the situation in Yemen is exacerbated by regional tensions; [rising food prices](#); [climate change](#) and lack of access to [water](#); increasing cases of [cholera](#) and [measles](#); and poverty and [economic crisis](#). An estimated [18.2](#) million people need humanitarian assistance, [49%](#) of whom are women and girls, while the Humanitarian Response Plan is only [27%](#) funded. Women and children comprise nearly [80%](#) of the [4.5 million](#) people who are internally displaced and face the worst impacts of food insecurity. Households are resorting to [extreme coping mechanisms](#), including [child, early and forced marriage](#); [over 30%](#) of girls are married before age 18. [LGBTIQ people](#) have also been targeted by all parties to the conflict. However, delivery of principled humanitarian response by both international and Yemeni civil society is threatened by an increasingly hostile operating environment. The [mahram \(male guardian\) requirement](#) impedes the ability of women, including [aid workers](#), to work, travel, and access [healthcare](#), including [reproductive healthcare](#). [Women-led](#) and [civil society](#) organizations, [journalists](#), and [WHRDs](#), face [escalating restrictions](#), [threats](#), [arbitrary detentions](#), [enforced disappearances](#), hate speech, and targeted killings. At least [60 Yemeni workers](#) of [international and national NGOs and civil society](#), including 13 UN staff, remain [arbitrarily detained](#), [compromising](#) the delivery of critical humanitarian assistance.

The Security Council should [continue to call for the immediate and unconditional release](#) of all UN and NGO personnel arbitrarily detained in Yemen. It should also express support for an inclusive political process with the full, equal, safe, and meaningful participation of [diverse women](#) in all peace and security decision-making processes, and in the humanitarian response; and call on donors to both provide additional direct, flexible funding for local organizations and address existing gaps in the [2024 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan](#). The Council should demand that all UN-supported peace committees include women, including the [Prisoners' Exchange](#), the [Taiz Committee](#), and the Security and Military Committees. Further, the Council should demand [all parties](#) to the conflict and their allies respect international human rights and humanitarian law, and emphasize that women's human rights must be [non-negotiable](#) in any peace and political process. Finally, the Council should prioritize diplomatic efforts to de-escalate tensions in the region and reiterate its full support for the efforts of the UN Special Envoy for Yemen to secure a sustainable settlement to the conflict.

NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security members are: Amnesty International; CARE International; Center for Reproductive Rights; Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights; Global Justice Center; Global Network of Women Peacebuilders; Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict; Human Rights Watch; International Alert; MADRE; Nobel Women's Initiative; Outright International; Oxfam; Refugees International; Women Enabled International; Women for Women International; Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; and Women's Refugee Commission. The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security is a project of Tides Center.